

REMARKS

Claims 16-31 remain in this application. Claims 16, 23-26, 28 and 30-31 were amended to clarify claim terminology. No new matter has been introduced as a result of these amendments.

Claims 18-22, 26 and 27 were not examined, as it was claimed in the Office Action that claim 1 recited “at least one of first, second and third module types,” and that only one of the three modules are required. Applicants submit this interpretation is incorrect. The claims recite a plurality of different exchangeable modules each of which connect to a respective channel group. The claims further recite exchangeable modules “comprising at least one” of the aforementioned module types – meaning that a first, or a second or a third module type may be used. In other words, the plurality of exchangeable modules, as an example, may include a first and a second module, or a second and third module, and so on. Claim 23 further recites a fourth module type that also is incorporated into the configuration of claim 1. There is nothing in the claim language that suggests that only the first module is used. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 28 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. As a result of the present amendments to claim 28, Applicants submit the rejection has been overcome. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 16, 17, 30 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wu et al. (US Patent 6,545,783) in view of Gerstel (US Patent 6,721,508).

Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wu et al. (US Patent 6,545,783) in view of Gerstel (US Patent 6,721,508), and further in view of Gaudino (“Remote Provisioning of a Reconfigurable WDM Multichannel Add/Drop Multiplexer”).

Claims 24, 25, 28 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wu et al. (US Patent 6,545,783) in view of Gerstel (US Patent 6,721,508), in view of Gaudino (“Remote Provisioning of a Reconfigurable WDM Multichannel Add/Drop Multiplexer”), and further in view of Liu et al. (US Patent 6,208,443). Applicants traverse these rejections.

Specifically, the cited art, alone or in combination, fails to teach a plurality of different exchangeable modules each of which connect to a respective channel group for connecting

through and branching off channels; the exchangeable modules comprising at least one of a first, second, and a third module type as recited in claim 16 and similarly recited in claim 30 and 31. None of the cited references teach the use of exchangeable modules as recited in the present claims.

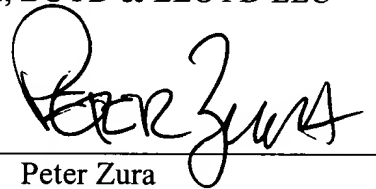
Wu discloses a EDM add-drop multiplexer system, wherein the system uses modules for add-drop channels, while passing other signals as express channels (FIG. 1; col. 5, lines 19-35). However, Wu does not disclose an add-drop multiplexer with different exchangeable modules – only one module type (500) is used. Furthermore, none of the other cited references disclose these features and also do not solve the deficiencies of Wu.

For the reasons cited above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 16-31 are both novel and non-obvious over the art of record. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. It is further noted that no fees are due in connection with this response at this time. If any fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the office is hereby authorized to deduct said fees from Deposit Account No.: 02-1818. If such a deduction is made, please indicate the Attorney Docket Number (0112740-665) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY



Peter Zura
Reg. No. 48,196
Customer No.: 29177
Phone: (312) 807-4208

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